

# Wernli and Dubs to tumble

03/06/02

**By Sue Morris**

Wernli Residence Center, a dormitory locked years before the closing of Westmar College in 1997, is expected to be demolished today (Wednesday) on the west side of the campus, according to Le Mars officials.



Electrical systems were pulled from the building Monday, said John Meis, community development director. That followed the completion of asbestos abatement in the 1921 structure by J&J and Company, Ltd. from Sioux City.

Meis explained that the company's bid had been significantly the lowest for the asbestos removal. During the work at Wernli, Meis had heard of an OSHA inspection of the site, but has received no reports of compliance problems. The project was also visited by a state inspector, with no objections reported with the work, according to Meis.

Plans call for equipment from TEMC of Jefferson, S.D., to wreck from both the north and south sides of Wernli Hall so the building can collapse on itself, explained Scott Langel, city administrator and engineer.

Demolition had been planned by Westmar officials for both Wernli and Dubs Memorial Hall, a classroom building constructed in 1920. It also had been kept locked for years before the college's closing.

This week asbestos removal has started at Dubs with J&J sealing openings in the building except for the installation of tubes for air filtration. When the asbestos has been completely abated, TEMC will start demolition of that structure. Meis said that requests for proposal on the work were sent to all contractors in the area who had expressed an interest in the project. The contractors had completed demolition of the Institutional Advancement building across 10th Street Southeast earlier this winter.

As the demolition workers continue their work on Dubs Hall, its front lawn is getting a new start with construction of a park to honor Westmar and a memorial to veterans. Memorabilia from the college and local military items have been collected for display in the park. The Le Mars Sertoma Club will use their own funds plus a \$1,600 grant from Sertoma International, to donate about \$5,000 for the new city park.

# Wernli wore out

03/13/02

**Sentinel photo by Sue Morris**

Wernli Residence Center, built in 1921, was demolished Tuesday, March 12 on the west side of the former Westmar campus. The week delay was due to storms forecast to hit before the removal of debris could be finished. The City of Le Mars has contracted with TEMC to collapse Dubs Memorial Hall to the northeast after asbestos removal is completed.



Westmar: five years after

By Sue Morris

As of November 2002, it had been five years since Westmar's es.

In those years, most of the property had been sold or converted

provided by the City of Le Mars, shows land to the south of 12th Street Southeast has been sold for residential development. Three dormitory buildings had already been converted to apartments, with Bonebrake getting new residents and garages this year under private ownership.

The year 2002 saw the demolition of Wernli Residence Hall and

leaders. The Institutional Advancement Building was demolished in late 2001.

The Rejoice Community Church moved from their birthplace in the

the owners of the South Academic Center. Western Iowa Tech and Buena Vista University will continue to offer classes in the church-owned SAC. The church had already purchased land to the southwest of SAC to someday build a church.

Further renovations were made in the summer of 2002 to the

Center. The site of many wedding receptions, anniversary parties, business and community events, the convention center now includes comfortable, attractive tables and chairs, a bar for events downstairs, as well as a skylight. Parties can also rent the "Queen Elizabeth" double-decker bus, donated in 2002 to Le Mars in honor

of the area's British heritage.

The crown jewel to 2002's changes on the campus is expected on view this winter with the renovation of the former student union as the Weidler Community Services Campus. After two years of planning, the City of Le Mars received notice in March of a \$417,000 Community Betterment and Development Grant for the renovation of the 1957 building. Approximately 18,200 square feet will become a center with space rented to nonprofit agencies.

Weidler's upper floor will house Plains Area Mental Health Center and the Big Sioux Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association. The lower level already houses the Early Head Start program and Mid-Sioux Opportunity's outreach center which will be joined by Head Start and the Le Mars Daycare children. A parking lot with a drive from First Avenue Southeast provides easier access to the center.

Items from Westmar's heritage will be on display in a park at 10th Street and Third Avenue Southeast. It is slated to also honor military veterans of the area.